Cancun - Network City

Introduction

In 1974 Cancun was constituted and planned to be a tourist city with a support village of 150 thousand inhabitants. Mexico's first planned city, in three decades reached out to be the most important and most successful tourist centers of Mexico and the Caribbean. In the year 2007 we had and approximate of 27 thousand 500 hotel rooms divided over 146 hotels and creating thousands of jobs.

Planned as a High Rank Tourist Centre, Cancun is now the results of an accelerated grow and an uncontrolled urban sprawl. The support village consists of 575 thousand habitants, living in 5 thousand hectares. Four times as much as planned originally. The irregular zones flourish on the borders of the urban spot, with 15 thousand habitants living in 3 thousand 200 hectares. These areas without any services are a threat for the urban planning of the city and especially for the mobility network.

The city receives huge flows of immigrants every year, according to statistics 26 thousand 900 on an annual base. This means diary 74 personas, or 15 families, who need 15 houses, 11 cars, 42 workplaces, schools and hospitals and other services.

Also Cancun has the second large airport of the country and now a day is improving its installations to become one of the most modern and best airports of the world.

History development pattern

The first master plan for Cancun shows us that the development was thought to have three different areas: first, the island or hotel-district, where the tourists stay on their journey, second, Cancun or the service city, where the services are established, administration services are and the people live and as last, the airport area from whom al the transit to and from the city and the hotel-zone depart. But however, already in 1974, the first year that Cancun was operating, attracted by the offer for employment, there where 6 thousand people living in camps and irregular zones at the borders of the territory what was destined to be the service city. As an intension to solve this problem, a commission was created called Puerto Juarez, to stimulate and promote a housing development, parallel to that of the hotel-district, with services for the residents and to avoid the invasion of land and the establishment of irregular zones.

So the fourth area was born, the Colony Puerto Juarez and under this scheme of four different areas the city grow at the so well know accelerated speed, following the speed of the flourishing economy. This grow however, made from Cancun a city of contrasts: The hotel zone with its luxury hotels and first class infrastructure, the service city for the middle class with large green areas and services on walking distances, and the colony for the working class with hardly green areas and without services.

In the year 2007, in the zone of Cancun which started as the colony are living 365 thousand habitants in 2 thousand 700 hectares and in the zone of Cancun, known as the city live 210 thousand people in 2 thousand 300 hectares.

In relation to the development pattern, this investigation is limited to the living district.

Diagnostic development pattern

The IMPLAN made a diagnosis of the development pattern what shows us that the city has been incorporating new areas for human settlement to the urban spot, as an unintended urban form without any concept. Also when analyzing this pattern, we see that there have

been several important and isolated efforts on planning, programs and projects. Most of these areas where former irregular zones, this means that there has not been an urban planning process. Areas invaded by people in search of a piece of land, giving birth to this anarchistic grow.
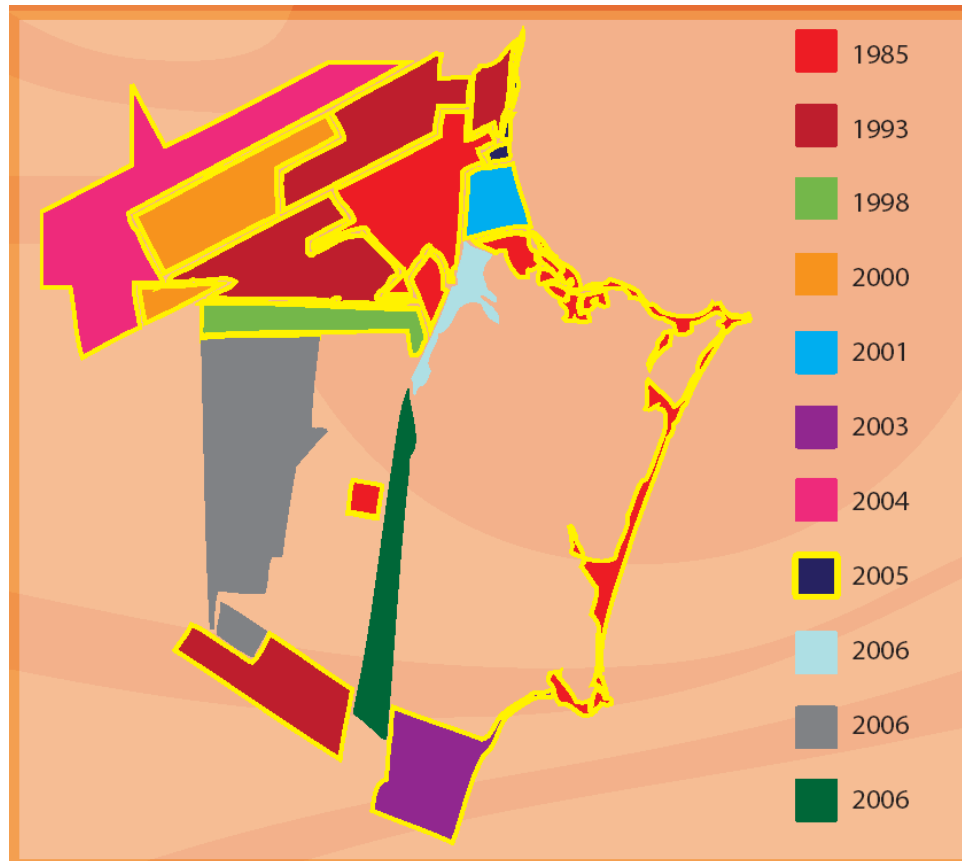
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Mobility and airport area

On terms of mobility an anarchistic urban grow is a not desirable situation. The planning efforts and projects as developed by authorities, did not integrate land-use themes with the primary road network or the primary road network integrated with public transport.

The local airport from Cancun, is now receiving al the transit to and from Cancun, the hotel-zone and to the neighbor tourist area 'the Riviera Maya' where another 65 thousand hotel rooms were build, what makes it the second airport from the country and gives a high potential to that zone.

Problems development pattern

The way Cancun developed generated the transformation of land-use which provoked a series of problems, such like:
- Small green areas
- Mixed land-use

- Equipment areas in the centre of quarter
- Separated and mixed city
- Minimal mobility
- Primary road network no articulated
- Land demand from the people who arrive in Cancun

The example of Cancun is showing us how traditional partial planning systems with partial and isolated plans, give us a partial vision for the city, resulting in a city with a fragmentized urban pattern, social disturbed and without spatial quality areas. A city with heavily congested routes at peak times, a lack of parking space in almost every part of the city and an overall bad connectivity and a population with no great feeling of wellbeing.

A vision is needed which integrates environmental, economical and social principals, which permits that the city analyses his vocation but also valuates his potential. Apart of a plan what will make it one city again.

Integrated solution

In June 2007, the IMPLAN presented the Strategic Plan Cancun 2030, what is the guide for, physical, economic and cultural transformation. The Strategic Plan Cancun 2030 is about sharing responsibilities between the 3 layers of government, the community and the business world.

The Plan gives a vision for the city as supported by Cancun's inhabitants. A vision has been redacted for the next thematic lines:
   1. Environment
   2. Urban territorial land use planning
   3. Urban mobility
   4. Tourism and economic development
   5. Development and social incorporation
   6. Education, culture and identity

These thematic lines give us more than 100 strategic projects, from whom we choose 11, to start the physical, economic and cultural transformation with the participation of the society and with a long term view.

The solution as given by the IMPLAN is assembling the city. Create a city of networks. Assembling through introducing elements and themes like:

- Connectivity
   - Articulated Primary Road Network & Mass Transport System, rapid mobility of many people connecting inhabitants with work, services and social activities.
   - Offering infrastructure with permits economic diversification.

- Green Corridors & Parks
   - Big public spaces and green areas with a spatial quality, for leisure with a high experiential value.
   - Introducing in the city an urban network that permits the establishment of social activities giving space to social activities areas.

- Social Spatial Change (Increase the density to avoid sprawl)
   - Airport City: A high density area concentrated around the airport as an engine for local economic development attracting aviation linked businesses.

- o Administrative & Business District: Creating a high density area with infrastructure to concentrate all administrative and business related activities.
- o Recreation & Cultural District: City Centre for leisure, cultural and social activities. Museum district and library.
- o Revitalization of Main Square: The first centre being the cultural icon of the 20th century city, point of identity for the community of Cancun.
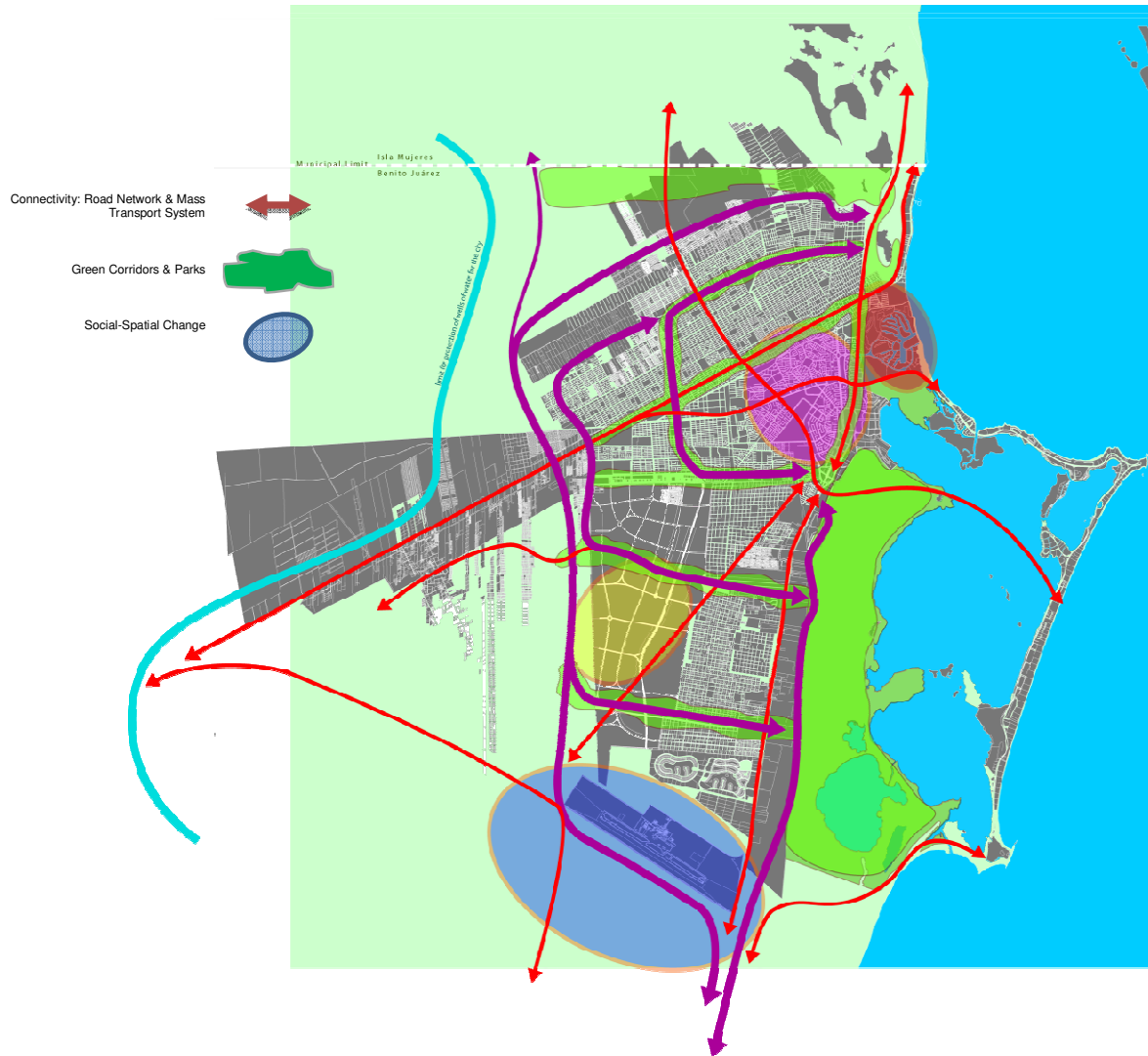
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Urban transformations are opportunities for integration and with this guide we can reach for the vision of the city; Cancun being the tourist & logistic capitol of the Caribbean, with diversification and excellence in the services, a global city with financial districts, convention centres and cultural activities.

Arq. Eduardo Ortiz Jasso
Cancun – Network City
México